

The Republican.

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TO THE REVEREND DR. COTTON, CHAPLAIN
OF NEWGATE.

LETTER IV.

REVEREND SIR, Newgate, September 8, 1824.

I SHOULD not have carried my remarks to such a length on any other article of your creed; than the one *On the being of a God*. This article your author considers to be the ground work of his religion; so I do; and being convinced, that it is founded on falsehood, I have directed my attack solely at the foundation. If I overthrow that foundation, I presume that I may be excused from noticing the errors which are built upon it. It may, perhaps, appear ridiculous on my part to address arguments against Christianity to a man, whom I already consider to be a hypocrite, and whose well paid services destroy even the possibility of his ever being otherwise. Did these lines meet no other eye, it would be ridiculous indeed; but since they are intended for the press, and may fall into the hands of men who may not have given this subject the attention it deserves, it is not improbable but that they may carry conviction to the minds of some who are not so much interested in the support of falsehood. I have ever found a priest ready to argue on the tenets of his belief, until he had discovered that his opponent was capable of answering him—capable of discovering the difference between sophistry and sound argument. But this discovered, I have never found one who was not desirous to give up the argument, rather than risk the chance of a defeat: so well do the priests know the weakness of their cause, and so careful are they not to expose it. This being the case, it becomes an imperative duty on every man, who is capable to answer the sophistry of the priest, whenever he has an opportunity. Not merely for the sake of exposing his opponent, but in order to provide weapons for those who have

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not had the opportunity of collecting for themselves. It was under this impression, that I began my remarks on the lecture before me. When you first produced it as "excellent and admirable," you, no doubt, imagined that you were placing an excellent piece of sophistry in the hands of one who would not be able to detect it. But for this once you were mistaken: I consider myself equal to the task, I conceived that my remarks might prove useful to others. Not to the general readers of the Republican, through the medium of which I now address you, they are in most cases so far my superior as to be beyond the possibility of receiving instructions from me; but to some of those casual readers, into whose hands they may chance to fall. These observations may, perhaps, appear ill-timed; if so, I cannot help it—I pen my ideas, as they arise in my my own mind—if they are out of order, I am sorry for it, I wish I was master of more knowledge and experience. But as trifling difficulties should not prevent us from doing the best we can, I proceed to notice the remainder of your "excellent and admirable" Lecture.

"That he (God) is not perceived by any of our senses is no objection at all against his being." I presume that it is a decisive objection against such a being as this God is described to be—an almighty governor and director of the universe: for if this being be all-powerful, he must be the whole of nature; my arm and the pen it wields must be a part, as well as the immense globe we inhabit, and the many others we see scattered around us. Matter or nature as a whole is not possessed of senses—of intelligence; it is only certain small portions of matter, under a peculiar organization, that are possessed of the sense of feeling. Consequently, there cannot be a thinking, intelligent being, at the same time all-powerful; for intelligence is evidently the result of arrangements of matter, and governed solely by material objects. Man possesses the highest *known* state of intelligence; but should there exist beings possessed of more, still they cannot be all-powerful, for intelligence cannot cause matter to act otherwise than by her own energies or powers. No located being can be almighty: the whole of nature is alone almighty; but the whole of nature is not intelligent, does not act from design.

"For our minds also are imperceptible by sense; but as they notwithstanding, shew their existence by moving our bodies according to their pleasure, so God doth show his by moving and disposing of all things as he wills." If the mind was not dependant on sensation, it may apply to the

Bishop's argument; but as it is, it is totally irrelevant to the subject. The animal world is distinguished from the vegetable and mineral, by the sense of feeling; and this sense being more or less acute in different animals, occasions the variety and degree of mind which they are found to possess. But be this degree what it may, it cannot neither add to nor diminish the powers of nature. The imagination might rove beyond visible objects—might "build Castles in the air"—but it cannot find tangible objects to answer to the phantoms it creates. Could the mind move our "bodies according to its pleasure," I believe we should soon see some rapid movements taking place: some would be for a trip to the sun, others to the moon; some to one planet, some to another; some to the North Pole, others to the South; and speaking for myself, I should prefer a trip over the fine open downs in Dorsetshire, to a continuance within these walls. But this is not the case: mind without matter is a nonentity, a thing of nought; and where it is found connected with matter—with those peculiar organizations which compose the animal world—from whence alone intelligence is found to proceed, it is still to be governed by the immutable laws of nature. Here then, the argument by analogy, is decidedly against the belief of an immaterial being, or great spirit, ruling the universe. The mind, as we find it in man, may invent plans; but material substances, and their inherent properties or powers, can alone carry them into execution. If our plans are not consonant to the known powers of nature, they inevitably fail. How many plans have been invented to obtain a perpetual motion; but those *known* powers of nature which *we* are enabled to put into action, are incompetent to the task; consequently, the results have never answered the object in view.

"And the same argument proves his presence with all things; for wherever he acts there he certainly is: and therefore he is every where." We do not want argument to prove, that there is a power every where acting, experience is continually convincing us of this truth, but that this is a feeling, thinking, intelligent, designing power, we have not the least shadow of a proof. Whenever a phenomenon strikes our senses, we are convinced this power is acting: in some cases, we discover its mode or manner of acting; in others, our limited knowledge denies us this satisfaction. But of all these phenomena, of which we are enabled to discover the cause, not one is found to proceed from design. Then why should we attribute these causes to a designing power, which *we do not*

understand—which we cannot, at present, fathom, seeing that all those *we do* understand, are not governed by design? I cannot expect that you will answer me conscientiously—that you will own the errors, and worse than uselessness of your profession—of course not—you must keep up imaginary monarchs, or the people will not consider themselves in want of you and your brethren of the cloth as intercessors.

I think I can pretty accurately describe, what will be the passing ideas in your mind, when the above question meets your eye. If I am not mistaken in your character, you will immediately allow, that no one possessed of even a moderate share of the knowledge of the present day, can believe in such a God as you preach to the people. But then you will mentally exclaim, “the ignorant do believe, they are the most numerous party, and while we can support our profitable profession by continuing the delusion, we should be to blame to give it up. We are now driven to the last possible shift; and when scientific knowledge, which it is but too evident is rapidly increasing, is arrived at such a height as to turn the stream against us, why then, of course, we must give it up; and those who have not made a purse out of their present abundance, must seek a livelihood by some other means. But we must hold to it so long as we possibly can. I, for one, will maintain my ground against truth and reason, while there is a chance remaining. And the complicated cunning and sophistry of so many ages, so many metaphysical brains are not to be easily thrown aside; especially while we have the aid of the civil power, and the prejudices of education acting in our favour.” I will not vouch for the correctness of the above, but I believe, if you would but honestly avow it, I should be found more correct than prophets in general. Be this as it may, I have no chance of ascertaining its correctness, and must content myself with imagining that I am not far wrong.

The remaining part of this Lecture has nothing to do with the question at issue, (the being of a God) it is merely a repetition of those contradictory attributes, which, I believe, I have already sufficiently answered. There is something about “duties owing to this our lawful sovereign;” but, as I have already said, let us first discover that a God exists, and then it will be quite time enough to talk of his attributes. And, as to duties, they are only reciprocal; and under this view, I believe mankind are indebted to Gods, neither for good nor evil. I shall now close my remarks, with again calling to your attention those particulars wherein I dissent

from your "excellent and admirable," and right reverend author.

The Archbishop's avowed purpose was to support, by his writing, a Creed, or system of religious faith. This Creed is founded on the first article, the belief in an Almighty supernatural power, or God. This article I consider to be founded on falsehood and sophistry, and, of course, all the others. But willing to see what every one has to say in behalf of his opinions, and having had them recommended by you as something out of the common, I determined to examine them, and to give you my opinions as to their real merit. This I have done; and I find them ill deserving the encomiums you bestowed upon them. In the first paragraph, the Bishop discovers the weakness of his cause, when he calls in the aid of universal opinion. Experience hath often proved, that universal opinions may be erroneous; consequently they can be no proof: it is not the number of those who support an opinion, that give it an air of authenticity; but the knowledge which the parties have of the subject on which they decide. That the majority of mankind have not sufficient knowledge to decide on this subject, is fully evident. But they have ever considered the decisions of others sufficient, without examining themselves, or attempting to ascertain whether those who decided for them had not other views than to elucidate truth. A few have always undertaken to decide for the many; self-interest directed these few to decide after a certain manner; the many abided by it; and thus the partial opinions of a few interested individuals, have become the opinions of the multitude. But the eye of the philosopher penetrates deeper. Something more than vague declamation, popular opinion, or specious argument is required to convince him of the truth of a disputed and difficult problem. The Bishop next proceeds to notice "many wonderful things;" and because he does not understand how these things should be as he sees them, he adduces them as proofs of his favourite phantom: thus he makes his want of knowledge on one subject serve to cover his ignorance on another; and he imagines that he has proved the existence of a God or supernatural power, merely because he cannot comprehend how natural powers could produce the phenomena which surround him! But, after having imagined that there must be a being, a something above nature, he is still compelled to return to nature, for materials of which to compose it. He saw the superiority which the mind of man gave him over other animals; and to exaggerate the qualities which com-

posed, or resulted from the mind, to the utmost stretch of his imagination, was his only aim. And this done, he vainly presumes that he has discovered and described his God; for he commences his next paragraph in the following style of assurance: "Such then is the nature of God." But here the Bishop ended his enquiry. He built his God with qualities found to combine in an imperfect state, and he did not see that when attributed to a divinity in an all-perfect state, they must destroy each other.

You have now, Sir, a few of my reasons for not believing in supernaturals. If you can remove these reasons, if you can remove the objections I have stated, you will confer a lasting benefit on your profession; for if not removed, I shall continue to war against the Priest, as the supporter of the most useless and mischievous of all useless and mischievous crafts. If such a God as you preach exists, it falls on you to prove it; all I can do, is to examine, and to refute, if I consider them unfounded, the arguments you may adduce; for the "*onus probandi*" falls on the person who affirms, not on him who denies. Your religion is built on the belief of a supernatural God; after the most laboured examination, I cannot find any proof of such an existence; consequently, I cannot believe in it. Prove that your God exists, and I will support theistical opinions, as warmly as I now oppose them and you.

RICHARD HASSELL.

TO MR. R. CARLILE, DORCHESTER GAOL.

AGRARIAN EQUALITY.

"Independence is my happiness, and I view things as they are, without regard to place or person; my country is the world, and my religion is to do good."

PAINÉ.

Tallington Park, 1824.

SPAIN has again fallen! The tyrants of the world are again triumphant; and another precedent is recorded in the annals of despotism, to justify other invasions, which the enemies of man, may think necessary for the security of the *monarchical principle*. Yes, the bloody tragedy has been performed,

and the prologue spoken at the commencement, by George IV., and the epilogue delivered at the conclusion, by the Lords Commissioners, are well worthy of such a performance. If deceit be the triumph of political genius; if meanness be the spirit of economy; and treachery, the master-stroke of policy, the members of the English Government are every way great. They are the *whigs* of the *holy alliance*. They interpose a sham opposition, in order to blind and deceive the world, whilst the *holy tories* invade nation after nation, in order to reduce every civil government to a level with their own narrow ideas of human policy. This system of interference and usurpation will continue, if the people of Europe do not adopt some new plan of defence, till invasion becomes part and parcel of the laws of nations. The despots have already made it lawful, according to their code, for Austria to invade Italy; to hold that beautiful country in military subjection, and France has been permitted to act the same part in Spain. Who doubts that Russia will follow the example, by invading and retaining Turkey, as soon as the Greeks and Turks shall have so exhausted themselves as to become an easy prey?

No nation will be permitted to enjoy any thing like rational freedom, until some plan be adopted, which shall induce the people to defend their country, and their country's liberties, with the same spirit and determination, as an individual would defend his own private property, if it were attacked by a thief. And the only plan, known at present, which would produce that glorious effect, is that of AGRARIAN EQUALITY.

In other words, let every individual have an equal interest, or profit in that *land* which gave him birth¹, and from

¹ What are they to have who are born upon the water? The fishes? Besides, the land gives birth to other animals as well as to man, who have the same claim for sustenance; which clearly proves, that there is no right of possession but in the right of power or conquest. Again, is the female to have as much profit as the male? the new born infant as the aged sire who has toiled to improve it? If not, by what right do you exclude? If so, at what age does the right of possession commence? The truth is, that by the rule of right, there is no right of profit or possession in the matter, beyond that policy which human law establishes. If the present law be wrong, and I think it wrong, all we can do is to re-conquer that which we have lost, or what is right and better. And this conquest, neighbour Devonport, must be obtained by something more than a war of words. The aristocrats will tell you, that their possessions are worth fighting for with deadly weapons. Call upon them for their title deeds, and like the Earl Warren, whose case you have quoted, they will show you their swords.

R. C.

which is extracted the sustenance of every thing that has life. All the lands which are reduced to private property, are so many usurpations; those who hold lands to the exclusion of others, would, if they could, usurp, enclose, and exclude us from the air we breathe, nay, this has been done as far as it was practicable, in the shape of window tax!

We have now had a sufficient number of revolutions, and counter-revolutions, to convince, I should hope, every reflecting man, that there is something still wanting to give permanency to any great national reform. We need not make much inquiry into the cause of revolutions; they are the effects of an over-wrought despotism, of a heavier burden than the people can bear. So peaceably inclined are men in general, that that country must be in a dreadful state wherever a revolution takes place: to such a people it is a matter of life or death. The true and only cause of counter-revolutions, is the want of the above mentioned plan being put into full practise. It is clear to me, that there is no other scheme sufficiently strong, to enable the people effectually to conquer their tyrants, and to retain the advantages which are sought for in revolutions. And yet, it is on this very point, Mr. Carlile, that you and I disagree. You believe, that every thing that is necessary to be known to render a country as happy and as prosperous as possible, is to be found in Paine's works². For many years I believed the same; but I am now, more than ever convinced, that there remains another step to ascend in political science, ere we can reach that prosperity and happiness which Mr. Paine, more than any other man, laboured to promote. If I have attempted to prove that Paine did not go far enough in political reform; how far, how very far have you not out-run him in theological speculations. Paine only denied the di-

² I really do not know that I believe any thing of the kind. I grant, that Mr. Paine, from his situation, ability and disposition, did more individual good, as a political writer, than perhaps will ever fall to the lot of another man; but I have never made his writings my Bible or Divine Revelation, not to be departed from even if absurd. I admire all in Mr. Paine that is admirable, and I find more of that quality in him than in the history of any other man recorded. I have no idol; but am free to follow that line of conduct and those opinions which shall promise the greatest amount of public good. I have no political creed in common with Mr. Paine, unless it be the one of electing all public officers by universal suffrage. If it be the taste of the nation, upon this scale of election, to have every thing as it now exists, I shall not murmur; though I would go on to point out the evils connected with such a system, and advise changes, attributing that taste to a want of knowledge upon the subject.

vinity of Christ; but you deny an almighty power, and have proclaimed through an hundred publications the non-existence of that God whom Paine left omnipotent, omniscient, and omnifick. This is a convincing proof, that you think he did not go far enough in religious reform. I will, therefore, endeavour further to prove, that every thing short of an absolute *equality in land*, is a denial of those rights which nature or nature's god intended that man should enjoy³.

I do not know that I should have written on this subject again, had it not been for what dropped from you from time to time in the Republican, and the fall of Spain! That event has convinced me, that whatever revolutions take place, no new order of things will stand for any length of time without a more equal distribution of landed interest: I told you so in my letter in the Republican in 1822. I then said, "I feel assured, if such a Republic, as you seem satisfied with, was to be established in this country; that is, to let the present landholders hold on, as they do at present; I say, such a Republic would not stand seven years. Some General Monk would bring back a King." Now do we not see this prediction fulfilled by the fall of Spain? The Spanish government was completely Republican⁴, and yet, with all its efforts to preserve life, it could only spin out a three years existence! If I were asked the cause of its fall, I should

³ Neither "Nature" nor "Nature's God" intended any thing about the matter. It ranks among the class of absurdities, to be ever saying that an *almighty power* intends that which is never brought about. The contradiction in the assertion is a proof of its nonsense.

R. C.

⁴ How could it be Republican, with such a King and such a Priesthood? It is very difficult to express systems correctly by single words. Pope was perfectly correct, as far as he went, when he said:—

"For forms of government let fools contest,
That which is best administered is best."

So say I; but I conclude that the best administrations of government will never be found with a hereditary king, a hereditary aristocracy, and a hereditary priesthood. Were it possible, always to have the wisest and best man in the country for an absolute monarch, that, in my judgment, would produce the best administration of government. This can only be done by frequent election; and even then the best may not be always chosen. There are difficulties and evils in all systems: our rule of right procedure is to seek and to support that which has the least. I should have observed, in behalf of, and as a matter of justice to, Mr. Paine, that he was not so much of a theorist, as of a practical man, in rooting up existing evils, prejudices, and ignorances. Where you fairly eradicate an evil; it is not likely, scarcely possible, that a greater evil will be allowed to take its place.

R. C.

answer, because, Spain, even in her Republican state, was not, to the great bulk of the people, worth defending. The state paupers and city beggars will be gainers by the restoration.

In your address to the Haytians, No. 30, Vol. VI., you say, "It is a bad principle in a nation to alineate its lands and mines to individuals, as individual property." And again, "the land with all its natural productions, may, and ought to be a *common property*." Here we are united, our sentiments are the same; but no sooner do you come within the embrace of nature and throw yourself on her bosom, than you spring up with a sudden start, and exclaim, "Of all the projects that were ever broached, that of an equality of property is the most impracticable⁵" Why, Sir, many things seem impracticable, and impossible too, until they are attempted. It seems to me impossible, under the present order of things, to maintain an equal balance of power in Europe, and yet, what seas of human blood have not been spilt, and mines of wealth expended to obtain that still distant object? The discovery of the origin of matter and motion seems to me quite impossible⁶; and yet, what time is not spent, and what volumes are not written on that mysterious subject?

I contend that an equality of property in land is practicable. I never knew any body that advocated an equalization of all sorts of property, except Tom Preston the shoe-maker. The Old Times says, that Tom includes all kinds of property in his system; but every body knows, that this Knight of

⁵ There is no contradiction in my observations. The land and its natural products are wholly distinct from that capital which we call property, an accumulation of the produce of industry. I have plainly and consistently advocated the raising of a revenue for the purposes of Government from the land, in the shape of tax or rent. All a people can fairly desire is, to be an untaxed people; and if those who hold the land pay a tax for its use to those who do not hold, "*agrarian equality*" is fully accomplished. To me, Allen Davenport, seems to crave to be a little aristocrat, to have a rent roll. In a former letter, I made it plain, that if he and each individual had such a rent roll, it would not benefit them; for if received as a tax, or rent upon the land, it must be paid away in the shape of some other tax. That system of Government which shall leave a free trade and an untaxed people, appears to me to be the highest good in politics. I am inclined to be very deep as a Reformer, thoroughly radical; but not to be silly.

R. C.

⁶ Yes, if there be no origin to be discovered. It would be like a journey to find the ends and corners of the earth, because the Bible, being the word of God and some priests, has taught such geographical errors. None but madmen, spiritualists, talk about the origin of matter and motion.

R. C.

the Aul is sometimes under the influence of the moon; and some times affected by a much warmer planet: in either case Tom may be allowed to rave⁷. I know that an equality of all sorts of property is both impracticable and impossible; but why will they withhold from man those common privileges, and necessary benefits which are so readily granted to the beast? If a man has a mare, and the mare has a colt, the owner of the mare does not pinch out of the mare's allowance a maintenance for the colt; neither does he impose more labour on the animal for that purpose, as is the case with a man and his children. If you think this is not a fair comparison, I will ascend a little higher; I will refer you to the plantations, where there are none but slaves; for there you will find, that whether men, women, or children, they all receive a proportionate equality in the means of subsistence. The slave-masters, brutes as some of them are, would never think of dividing that among three or four, which was only necessary for one. The same equalizing principle is recognized in the economy of every royal family in Europe. If an unmarried king, is in the possession of a million a year; there is something wrong from the state, as an outfit; an extra annual allowance granted when he takes a wife. The moment a royal child is born, a principality, a dukedom, or a *bishoprick*, is conferred on the infant, from which is drawn a revenue for its maintenance. Should the royal couple have a hundred children; every child would be provided for by the state, independent of the revenues of the King and Queen. It has been said, that royal parents ought to maintain and portion their own children, the same as private gentlemen: and so they do in this artificial state; but the present system is that which nature points out. It matters not how great the revenue of the unmarried king is, whether it be a million, or two millions a year, it is supposed by those who grant it, that it is no more than his comforts and

⁷ I do not like this attack upon Thomas Preston; for I doubt its truth. Though the tri-coloured uniform of a General of Cavalry must be now moth eaten from the want of service, I am of opinion, that Tom is a right well meaning fellow, and can make a speech about ancient Greece and Rome as well, and as much to the purpose, as any of those talking things which constitute our Right Honourable and Honourable Houses of Legislature. It was certainly patriotic, and noble, and brave, in Thomas Preston, who with that natural impediment to be a foot soldier, a lame leg or foot, condescended to be content with the post of a General of Cavalry, and with Carlton House, or the Mansion House, as a residence, instead of being a Protector, a Consul, or a tri-coloured Emperor. There are not frequent instances of such patriotism and disinterestedness: so let us cherish and emulate them.

pleasures require; so that it is very natural, that if his expences increase, his income should increase. Now, if this is right and just in royal families, which I think no one will attempt to deny; why should not the same principle be acted upon towards private families, and a provision made by the state for every child? Why should not every child that is born in the country be entitled, at its birth, to a revenue from the state⁸, from the common farm, from the productions of the earth, as well as the child of a king? Nature owns the peasant⁹, and proclaims the assistance she receives at his hands; but kings she acknowledges not; they are the violators of her brightest laws, and the destroyers of her noblest walks—they are the foes of man¹⁰.

The equality, of which I am the humble advocate, is so just, so reasonable, and so irrefutable that most of those who attempt to oppose it, first exaggerate the original proposition, and then endeavour to strangle the real question by a refutation of their own exaggerations; knowing, as every one must, that the properties of nature must change before this plain and simple, though effectual system can be overturned. Major Cartwright, in his fifth letter to Lord John Russell, in the *Black Dwarf*, makes use of this *ruse*; speaking on the

⁸ What revenue? The tax must be imposed before it can be obtained: and what is this but an equality of all sorts of property. Thomas Preston can say no more. Pounds, shillings, and pence, Friend Davenport, do not grow out of the land: though the metals that make them may. It is quite clear, that you want a nation of Royal Families; and I think one too great a burthen. The natural productions of the earth are weeds and briars, and a beautiful confusion of things almost useless to man in his social state. Its improved condition, by social man, is the result of his individual labour, and the application to it of that manure and seed, and those tools and purchased labour, which strictly and justly speaking, are his private property. Our political economists say, that there is no actual rent to be obtained from the land, but in the difference of value between the best and worst lands, and the intermediate degrees of quality.

R. C.

⁹ Who or what is this Dame Nature that owns the peasant? Is she also an almighty designing power? If so, she sadly neglects the peasants of the present day. If figures be tolerated, they must have some relation to truth. Though I have long and often used this word *nature*, I begin to see it to be one of those words which ignorance fashions to cover its nakedness. The peasant has no protector, nor protectress, but in the strength of his knowledge, and in the right use of his brawny limbs. As he goes on to improve his knowledge, he will rescue himself from servitude to the tyrannical customs of his fellow man.

R. C.

¹⁰ Who makes them so? They have not the individual physical strength of a peasant. The fault then, is not in the individuals as Kings; but in those who suffer such an institution as a kingly office.

R. C.

subject of equality of property, he says, "any thing even bordering on an absolute equality of possessions, is the vision of insanity." Here, of course, the Major carries his point; for as nobody ever started the question of an absolute equality of possessions, of course there was nobody to refute. The Major knows well enough that the "Spencean System" *is no vision of insanity*. The Major next quotes Harrington on the subject, and says, that Harrington who twisted and turned society into every shape and form, says, "that levelling is not natural to men in a free state: a free people are therefore no levellers." True; but where, on the face of the whole globe, shall we find a free state, and a free people? If we look at Spain and Italy, what do we see, but the people of each country groaning under the double scourge of a despotic king and a foreign army? If we look at France, do we not see the people held in the most abject bondage, and compelled to crouch beneath the rod of the very tyrants who, before the union of the holy alliance, were twice expelled from their throne and country? If we look at home what a picture is presented to our eyes? Here we see one portion of the people wallowing in luxuries of every description, with full liberty to oppress and plunder the public, whilst another portion of the people are so poor, by no misconduct of their own, as not to be able to procure more than half a sufficiency of the common necessities of life: yet, if they dare to relate their tales of woe, and beg for a slice of bread to appease the tortures of hunger, they are seized in the most violent manner, and whether men women or children, linked to a chain and dragged through the streets, rank and file, to prison, and put to the tread mill to expiate their crime of being poor! Do we not see that the eighth part of the British population are dependent on parochial aid, and public charities for their support? If we look at America, whose government is the freest in the world, do we not see a growing aristocracy, though not titled, and a rapid increase of paupers and beggars, which do and always will multiply in proportion as the landholders decrease in number? As estates become little kingdoms, the working people of every country become beggars and slaves! Harrington is perfectly correct, when he says, that a free people are no levellers; for all the levelling business must be done before a people can become free. That this was Harrington's real meaning, there can be no doubt; but the idea of a whole nation holding its land in joint stock, never struck his ingenious mind, or it would, I am convinced from what I have

read of his works, have made a conspicuous figure in his "Oceana."

Your principal objections, Sir, when I wrote to you last on this subject were, that an equality of property even in land was impracticable; and if it could be put into practice, it would ruin all sorts of commerce; but what you have said in No. 18, of Vol. VIII., of the Republican, gives me great hope that time and reflection have removed those objections. You there say, that you desire an equalization of knowledge and equal happiness, and then you think, that *something like an equality of property* will be the result. This gives me the more pleasure, because, the words which I have marked for italics, are the very same words which I made use of in my first note on equality of property in No. 17, Vol. VI., of the Republican, and which formed the text of your reply to the same note. And believe me, Sir, it gives me the greatest satisfaction to know that you do think, and wish, shall I add? that something like an equality of property will be the result of an universal knowledge of human policy. Others object to this plan, and say, that if such a plan was to be acted upon, many of the working people, knowing that they would have something whether they were industrious or idle, would cease to labour, and the consequence would be, that the land would run to waste, and not produce enough of the necessaries of life for the general support of the population; which would produce discontent, anarchy, and every species of petty warfare, so that the result would be a general cry for the restoration of that government, which the people previous to this wonderful revolution thought so grievous, so unjust, and so tyrannical. Such objections as those would never be made by any reflecting man. It is the want of reflection, and entertaining that readiness of doubt of every thing that does not spring from our own brain, that keeps us continually in the dark, and makes us cherish the very system that destroys us. Mr. Owen rejected this system with disdain; but very readily adopted one of his own invention, though it is well known, that his plan, besides being absurd, tends to dependence and slavery; whilst the system I advocate is calculated to produce liberty, independence, and the most perfect happiness¹¹. Those who are afraid that the people would become

¹¹ Systems are all very pretty things upon paper, or in the head; but the question is, how will they fit the dispositions, the aggregate disposition of the people for whom they are intended, or to whom they are recommended? You must either make your system to fit that disposition, or

idle, the land cease to be cultivated, and every thing thrown into confusion, have only to look around them; let them look at the East India Company, the Banking Company, or any other Joint Stock Company, and see if they can discover any idleness, any inactivity, or any confusion among them; or whether they are not the most prosperous, the most wealthy, and the most powerful people, according to their number, of any people on the earth. But it may be said, that the persons who compose those companies are gentlemen, men of education and abilities, and therefore know how to conduct themselves, and how to manage the affairs of their firm, in a superior manner to what the working classes could if they were ever so desirous. This too is all prejudice and error; the working people, particularly the mechanics, seem to me, by what I have observed of them, to be competent, with a very little initiation, not only to manage any company, or corporation business, but to exercise all the functions of the government of the state. Their genius and abilities may be clearly perceived in all their little institutions. Their benefit societies, their trade meetings, their money clubs, &c. They act like so many little commonwealths. Men, women, and children, are concerned and interested in their governmental administrations. They draw up rules and regulations, by which they govern themselves; they elect their servants by a general vote, and place the greatest confidence in them, so long as they continue honest, and attentive to their respective duties; but no sooner does their conduct become impeachable, than they

that disposition to fit you system. Without this, all is speculation, vapour, for the time being: though I would not discourage a jarring of systems upon paper. There is a right time for all things, and degrees of quality in time, as relating to the advocacy of systems; but, in my judgment, the best of all political systems that can be agitated at this moment is, to overthrow the priesthood, by shewing their bad foundation. To introduce new systems of politics into society, it is absolutely necessary to begin with a removal of existing evils. I take the existence of a priesthood to be the greatest political evil in a state, and one the removal of which, will make the removal of every other one a comparatively easy task. Remove those evils, those opposing powers, and you will find society free to make any and every experiment for the best; but unless you remove those powerful evils; you may talk about systems of reform to your last day without producing the least effect. I am quite sure, that, if all those men and women, who do now, or, who, of late, did, call themselves Reformers, did see the means of Reform in its proper light, I should have their most strenuous support. I left their track to accomplish something I saw to be more useful, and many of them were erroneously angry with me for so doing. They may now, or will soon, see, that I was and am in the right course, and they in the wrong.

R. C.

are expelled from office, and sentenced to such other punishments as the whole society can or think proper to inflict. Any member of those societies can propose a new law, or an amendment to an old one. Their propositions are simple, generally unanimously carried, and seldom need to be repealed. What a contrast to the British Parliament, which passes a law one session, and the very next amends it, or repeals it altogether. Witness the new marriage act, the new vagrant act, and an hundred other stupid and ridiculous acts, all of which would disgrace a parliament of ploughboys. It appears, as if the British House of Commons had reached the *ne plus ultra* of legislation, and that all the laws they now enact, are meant for experiment; otherwise, they have taken the hint from the late Castlereagh, and, instead of digging holes one day and filling them up the next, they make laws one session, for no other purpose than to repeal the next, in order to keep themselves in employment.

One of the greatest beauties of this equality system would be, that such a commonwealth could never be invaded with any chance of success, by a foreign army. The whole population of the country being freeholders, or having part and parcel in the land, men, women, and children, at the first alarm, would fly to arms, and present such impenetrable phalanxes to the invader, that his defeat and ultimate destruction would be inevitable. Every house would be fortified, every street, lane, and public road would be intersected; trees would be felled, trenches would be sunk, and every thing which ingenuity could invent, and bravery achieve would be opposed to the enemy. Such a people would rush on to certain destruction, and prefer one common grave beneath the ruins of their country, rather than submit to the interference and dictation of either foreign or native tyrants. If the bare proclaiming of liberty and equality in France, could arouse such a spirit in the French people, as to enable them to dethrone and destroy their royal tyrants, expell an arrogant and overbearing aristocracy, and successfully defend themselves for twenty years against the repeated combinations of all the powers of Europe, to fall at last only because they deviated from the principles they first proclaimed! What energy, what courage, what determination would not be found in a people, who had the sense to discover, the boldness to proclaim, and the resolution to possess themselves of their rights and liberties by planting the

standard of justice in the earth, and enjoying all the glorious benefits arising from an agrarian equality?

The spirit which would animate such a people, in case of invasion, may be justly compared to that which would animate a village if one of its houses was on fire, every man in the village, the moment the alarm was given, would load himself with water, and hasten to the spot with all possible speed, to endeavour to arrest those devouring flames, which would perhaps, if not extinguished, not only reduce his neighbour's house, but the whole village to ashes. Such a people would be so wedded to their country, that on such an occasion all *self* would be lost in the glorious blaze of *social* love?

Had it not been for the circumstance of the Roman citizens being all freeholders, it would have been Rome, and not Carthage, that would have been razed to the ground. The Romans, in fighting for their estates, set their lives on the cast, they were triumphant; and Hannibal, the Napoleon of ancient times, perished in exile.

What liberty can you enjoy without possessing land? If you traverse a field, do you not commit a trespass¹²? If you pluck a berry, do you not violate the law? If you carry off one single grain of sand, do you not commit a larceny? It is said the serpent was *condemned* to lick the dust; but dare you lick the dust? No, to lick the dust in England would be a *privilege*!

The dust is *my lord's*, the sand is *my lord's*, the berry is *my lord's*, for the field is *my lord's*, into which you cannot intrude though under the most pressing necessity, without the risk of a prosecution. It is necessary to refer to the late cases of persons taken up under the infamous vagrant act. *My Lord* in possessing the land as private property, possesses all the other elements, fire, water, and air, as far as his domains extend, since every thing within the sphere of his estate is his Lordship's, from the lowest depth of the earth, to the highest point in the heavens. I should not be surprised,

¹² But if every individual had his six acres, he would not be at liberty to trespass upon the six acres of another. And if he let it out for rent as you propose, he would not be at liberty in addition to his rent to go and make what use he pleased of it. Your optics are certainly imperfect in application to this subject, Brother Devenport. I mean to say, your view of the matter is narrow, incorrect, and not to be carried into practice. I approach to you as near as I see my way well before me, and you must excuse me if I abstain from wandering in the dark, running my head against a post, or falling into a pit. As it is there is more difference between us in words and sound, than in sense and meaning.

R. C.

No. 13, Vol. X.

if I were to here of an action brought against some of the balloon gentlemen, for tresspass in passing the atmosphere over some great Lord's fields.

I feel as certain as I do of my own existence, that equal liberties will never be obtained, that equal rights will never be enjoyed, and that a fair and impartial administration of justice will never be established, till the system of private property in land be abolished.

That a republican government is preferable to a monarchical one, even the supporters of the latter scarcely attempt to deny; and that the form of government recommended by Paine, is the best that ever has yet been put into practice, is also undeniable; but even was such a form of government as that established in this country, it would be unable, however willing it may be, under the present laws relative to landed property, to rescue those tens of thousands of poor helpless creatures from the parish work-houses, those abodes of sorrow, of degradation, and of misery; nor could it make those independent of public charities, who have been so long compelled to depend on them for daily subsistence.

You have said in one of the Republicans, that you go to the root, and if any man will shew you that you are not at the root you will go deeper; deeper then, Sir, you must go, for if you are at the root, you are not yet at the bottom of it; where you must be before you can extract it. Your system may destroy that part of the root of the evil which is visible above the surface; but to eradicate it entirely, every fibre must be destroyed, and even the ground in which it grew, must undergo a total change.

I remember, Sir, you made an objection to my including houses in the public rental, as houses must be individual property. This I admit. They are manufactured articles. But I think the house-owners, if they could be made to thoroughly understand their own interest, would not object to their houses being made public property. A man who has a freehold house worth £100. a year rent, would be a gainer by the change; a very little reasoning will make this quite clear. Suppose you had a freehold house that would bring in £100. a year, you would have to pay, under the present system, at least, £25. in taxes annually. So that, if your freehold was worth £2000. every atom of it would pass from you to another master in eighty years, if you did not redeem it annually by paying a rent, call it taxes if you please, of £25. But this is not all, for whilst you are paying £25. a year for your freehold, you are paying perhaps

£100. a year on the articles which you and your family consume. Thus, in direct and indirect taxes, you are compelled to pay annually to the amount of £125.¹³ in order to retain your little estate. You would therefore pay to the government in rent or taxes, which is the same thing, the whole value of your freehold every fifty-three years. Refuse these payments, and you would be as readily turned out of your freehold, as a man would be turned out of his house, if he were to refuse to pay rent to his landlord. Why would it not be as well then, to pay rent to the people, as to pay thrice the amount in taxes to the government¹⁴? Mr. Southey must have had ideas something like these floating in his mind, when he put the following words into the mouth of John Ball, in his beautiful poem "Wat Tyler," "that all mankind as brethren must be equal; that privileged orders of society are evil and oppressive; that the right of property is a *juggle* to deceive the poor whom they oppress." Mr. Southey meant, no doubt, that the *right* of private property in land was a juggle to deceive; otherwise, he goes further than I in political reform, for the plain text seems to include all kinds of property, even his own hundred a year, and his annual pipe of wine, the exclusive property of the Poet Laureate.

It is generally said, that all wealth is acquired by labour, in the first instance this is true, but the operations of nature

¹³ This is making my payment more than my income. It is altogether a shuffle of words, a juggle of words. The question is, the smallest amount of taxation for a revenue to meet the expences of Government, and the raising, if possible, that taxation in the shape of rent upon land, so as to leave the people in reality untaxed. Even, if there were no tax or rent upon land, competition would supply its produce to the consumer at a price so much the less; and this fact refutes your whole scheme. Excessive taxation on industry, and a bad application of those taxes, constitute the evils under which we now suffer. The evil may be said to lay altogether in the application of the taxes, which supports idleness at the expence of industry. A heavy taxation, where it can be best borne, applied fairly to public improvements, does not appear to me to be injurious to the public as a whole: because there are certain improvements which are too great for individuals or private companies to undertake. General improvements must be the work of a Government.

R. C.

¹⁴ Paying to the people, and paying to a just Government, is one and the same thing: the difference is an unintelligible play upon words. In political truth, the people is nothing, nobody. Speak of an individual, and you speak of something; speak of a people and you speak of nothing tangible. The people is the wand of the political conjuror. He may deceive and rob you; but he neither instructs nor benefits. When you see a unanimous people, you will have a people to speak about; but in such a country as this, made up of a thousand sects, each considers itself the people.

R. C.

never ought to be lost sight of, if we wish fairly to understand our real condition in society, and to ascertain the full extent of our natural rights¹⁵.

In the manufacturing and commercial world every thing depends on industry alone; but in agriculture, nature performs a very prominent part. The moment a mechanic lays down his tools, every prospect of gain is suspended, all is still and mute, nothing stirs around him, nothing supplies his absence, to facilitate the conclusion of what he had begun: whilst the man who possesses land, has only to put his grain into the ground and leave it to the creative hand of nature, who will not fail in due time, by a mysterious operation, to raise it up and multiply it fifty, or an hundred fold¹⁶; and this is all performed in the absence of the labourer. Indeed, the advantages that accrue from the possession of land, are incalculable; for example:—an acre of land contains 4840 square yards; now suppose an acre of wheat was to be manufactured after the manner of artificial flowers; each square yard containing an hundred stems of wheat, allowing only six shillings per yard to the manufacturer, the sum would amount to £1452. The whole of this immense labour is performed by the energies of an invisible hand; by the hand of nature. Is not nature the common mother of all mankind? Is not the earth the theatre on which she incessantly labours to produce plenty for all, even for the noxious reptile? Nature is no respecter of persons nor of things¹⁷; the hayband that encircles the peasant's hat, is as glorious in her eyes, as the ten thousand pound diamond hat-band was, that blazed round the head of the late Castlereagh.

Who then, are nature's favourites? Who can say that he

¹⁵ What are natural rights? Ask yourself the question, try it every way, and you will find it to be the right of conquest. To hunt or fish, you may say is a natural right; it may be so; but it is the right of conquest over other animals. If fields of corn, or trees of fruit, continually presented themselves to your gathering, you have a certain degree of labour to accomplish for your food; and if you only gather as your stomach craves, you share in common with every other animal; if you gather in store, the act is a conquest from other animals. The same principles have a very near application to man and man.

R. C.

¹⁶ Or to destroy all his hopes by a blast, just as her almighty mood may come about. It is clear that Dame Nature cares nothing about us. We must take care of ourselves in spite of her.

R. C.

¹⁷ Very true, but you have said in a former part of your letter, that she owns peasants and disowns kings. As far as her benefits are in question, I had rather be disowned with the crown and million of pounds annually, than to be owned, with a hungry stomach and a clothing of haybands. 'Tis clear, that nature has no influence over human politics.

R. C.

has more right to the land than I have? Possession and right are not synonymous. Possession without right¹⁸ is usurpation; and it is against usurpation that I am at war. If governments are so anxious to maintain the balance of power in Europe, why should not the people be anxious to establish a balance of power among themselves¹⁹? Since a balance of power among the people is of much more importance, and of much more utility, than a balance of power among governments. Indeed the latter will never be attained, till the former is established. But the grand object of the governments of Europe, is not a balance of power, it is *an union of powers* that they wish for, that they may aid each other in the invasion of the peoples' rights, in the plunder of their property, and to trample on their liberties with impunity, as they have already done in Italy, and in Spain. And Greece, I repeat it, if she does not adopt some better system than any she has yet proclaimed, will be the next victim of the power of European balances; which unite only to destroy!

Perhaps, I may here be accused, that whilst I am exclaiming against oppression and robbery, I am advocating a system, which were it to be put in practice, would be one of the greatest robberies that can be conceived; for whilst it goes to rob a man of two or three thousand acres of land, it is proposed to allow in return the paltry profits arising from six acres, and that too out of what was his own freehold property! To such an accusation I should reply boldly, "and a plenty too." And if it must be called a robbery; is it not less criminal to rob the over-grown rich, in order to feed and clothe the half-starved, and half-naked poor; than to rob, as the present governments do, the wretched and miserable poor of more than half their earnings, to supply the rich with pernicious luxuries, and to furnish them with the means to rob the people of their rights and liberties? Let the great lords of the soil leave off plundering the people, then they may have some plea; at present they have none.

Besides, whenever was there a law enacted, that did not, by its operations, deprive somebody of property? And which deprivation the sufferers would of course call robbery.

¹⁸ Right consists of common consent, the laws of social compact: the word has no other meaning.

R. C.

¹⁹ This is what is wanted. Your "AGRARIAN EQUALITY" all centres in this desired balance of power. This paragraph has brought you into an intelligible, a practicable, a common sense subject.

R. C.

Deprive a pensioner of his unmerited pension, or the place-man of the emoluments of his useless place, and they will both call it a robbery. Abolish lotteries, and suppress gambling houses; and the jugglers in the former, and the robbers in the latter, will cry, "a robbery!" But the public who look upon one as a juggler, and the other as a nuisance, will be thankful to their legislators, when they see both suppressed. And the right of the property in land, (as private property) is a *juggle* which those who have land, make use of to *oppress* those who have none.

Now, as most, or all of our great landholders profess to be Christians, and believed, or pretend to believe, that the Bible is the word of God, let us see how their actions agree with their faith. In Leviticus xxv. 23, there God declares in the most unequivocal manner, that "the Land shall not be sold for *ever*; for the land is mine." That is, the land is God's. Yet, the landholders, in direct contradiction of this divine command, dare, impudently and audaciously, to buy and sell the land for *ever and ever*! And the rebel lawyer writes down the *blasphemous* sentence in the title deed of every estate, that is called a freehold. What a pity it is that God has no power to punish such daring violators of his laws. Nor is the holding of land, as private property, less contrary to the commands of the founder of the Christian religion, than it is to those of Jehovah himself; for when the young man, who had great possessions, in land I presume, applied to Christ to know what he should do to be saved; that is, to become a Christian, Jesus is made to reply, "sell off all that thou hast and give to the poor." This proves very clear to me, that a man could not then be a landholder and a Christian at the same time. But a more striking proof still is afforded, when St. Peter becomes the first lord of the treasury. Ananias is commanded by Lord Peter, to sell off all his property, (his estate) and to bring to the treasury the whole of its price. Ananias sold his estate, but not having quite so much faith as was required, reserved, for his own use, a small portion of the money. This was so offensive to God, that he had no sooner denied it, than he was struck dead upon the spot, and his wife, in a few minutes after, shared the same fate.

I once made those remarks to a member of a Bible Association, but was answered very abruptly, "such sacrifices are not required now." To which I replied, "it is folly then to force a circulation of the Bible, if its contents cannot be relied on." To this I received no answer. It is astonish-

ing how little of argument will silence a religious man, particularly, if his Bible is turned against him. How painful it must have been to the Judge and Jury, who, on June 10, at the Old Bailey, sat to try the bold and persevering John Clarke: to hear him make so many quotations from the Bible, every one of which must have been like a thorn planted in the breasts of his prosecutors. This is, in my opinion, the best mode of defence that can be adopted, for thus holding the mirror of their faith to the eyes of the Judge and Jury, they are compelled to see what absurdities a man is obliged to swallow, in order to become a Christian, and seeing this, it is impossible that they can retire from the Court, without losing a portion of their faith, and feeling a body of new ideas rising in rebellion against old opinions. But the Christian faith depends entirely on a lie; for a Christian is not required to believe the Bible, all that is required of him, is to say he believes it; and, as a great lie is as soon told as a little one, it is as easy to say, Jonah was alive three days in the fish's belly as one. Mr. Paine, in making the Bible refute itself, gave that beauty and strength to the "Age of Reason," which make it, in my opinion, superior to every other book of the kind. All who read it are Deists, whether they avow it or not. But I am wandering from my subject, instead of hastening as I ought, to the conclusion of this already too lengthy essay.

Well, I have already proved, that the buying and selling of land by individuals in perpetuity, is contrary to the express command of the God of the Jews; and I have as clearly proved, that it is incompatible with the Christian religion, as well as contrary to the precepts of its supposed founder, whom the Christians believe in, and worship as the son of God, for any individual to hold any portion of land as private and individual property. Indeed, the primitive Christians made it a rule for a long period, that before any person could become a member of their community, he was compelled to sell his property, if it was in land, and sink the money with all other property he might happen to possess, into one common joint stock, for the benefit of every member. Their motto was, "Let all things be common to all." This is the system against which, it is said, "the gates of hell shall not prevail." But the Christians have renounced their principles, and what hell could not effect, the printing press will achieve.

Every estate in England must have been an usurpation, and every title-deed must have been a forgery some time or other;

many of those usurpations and forgeries were put into practice at the time of the conquest. I remember reading some twenty years ago, in Littleton's History of England, a very striking instance of one of those usurpations. Some time after the conquest, and when the people began to enjoy some little repose after the storms that had overwhelmed their country, a court was instituted, and invested with power to summon every landholder in the kingdom before it, where the business of its members was to examine the title-deeds of their estates. After several of such like documents had been examined and decided on, a summons was sent to an old Earl, whose name was Warren. The old veteran, for he had been one of the invading army, immediately repaired to the Court, and presented himself at their bar for examination; but on the Court demanding the title-deed of his estate, the gallant old Earl drew an old sword from the scabbard, deeply incased in blood, which the historian calls rust, and exclaimed, "With this sword I obtained my estate, and with this sword will I defend it to the last drop of my blood!"²⁰ What powerful language, and how emphatically and decisively expressed. Here is no false canting lawyer brought into Court, no false title produced, no talk about the right of property as by law established, no equivocation, no evasion; the norman lord, without the least hesitation, shows the Court his title-deed, and that title-deed is the sword! Whether the Court was intimidated by this bold and daring threat of the Earl Warren, or whether the then government discovered their own folly, in proceeding thus to expose their own nakedness, or not, I cannot tell, neither can the historian; but certain it is, the Court proceeded no further, no further enquiries were made, and the thing was heard of no more. Now, if the Earl Warren's estate had no legal title then, it can have none now; therefore, it is as much an usurpation at the present period as it was 700 years ago. There is no doubt, that this usurpation, in common with thousands more of the kind, have been legalized by the legislature; so have the possession of Spain by the French been legalized by the

²⁰ That, Allen Davenport, is the Law of nature. We see nothing but a mass of animals generated for the purpose of devouring one another. The exception is in the herbivorous animals. Man is not an herbivorous animal: and if he were, the evil would not be less. There is the same natural right to devour as to be devoured. Reason from this point, and you will reason correctly. To remedy this evil disposition among mankind, we want your balance of power, and that, it seems to me, can only be acquired, by a far more extensive equal knowledge than exists at present.

Holy Alliance. But who are they that enact all the laws relative to landed property? The landholders to be sure. And what are the landholders? Are not the greatest part of them the very descendants of those usurpers and robbers, of which this Norman lord is a sample. What should we think of the legislation of a gang of thieves, who, after having committed an extensive robbery, assemble in council, to legalize their own acts of violence, and to pass laws to defend their stolen property from its rightful owners? Much the same, I presume, as we ought to think of the legislation of that gang of land-usurpers who, not long since, seized on and enclosed the common-fields and moor-lands which, from time immemorial, had been, as all land ought to be, the property of the public at large. The only difference in the actions of these two gangs is, the former legislates after, and the latter legislates before the robbery!

In your reply to my letters in No. 21, Vol. VI., you say "we must fetch down the haughty spirits of the Norman aristocrats." And so we must, but that is only a first consideration; the second is how to prevent them from rising again. Spain brought her aristocrats down. But she only shaved the heads of her Samsons; and no sooner did the hair of their strength shoot out again, than they pulled down the temple of her liberty about her ears. It is no manner of use to shave the heads of our Sampsons; they must be scalped, they must be scalped of their little kingdoms, and must make every acre of land public property before we can render the great Normans good and useful citizens. This once done, the world would no longer be a field of blood, as it is at present: all sorts of taxes being done away, that deadly hatred which now exists between the rich and poor, would be done away also, and the horrid din of war would be heard no more. Children would again become a blessing instead of a curse, as they are, under the present system, to their parents, for the earth may be made to produce, under a well organized system, founded on Agrarian Equality, sufficient of every thing that is necessary for the comfort and happiness, of double, eye treble its present population.

The whole empire of China, says Patrick, contains 333,000,000 souls; from this it is computed that were all parts of the earth equally populous, the population of the world, would amount to 10,655,000,000 people. According to this calculation, the world as it regards its population, is only in its infancy, since there is room yet, for ten times the number of its present inhabitants; and this helps to con-

firm what I have said above; that the earth with good management, may be made to produce every thing that is necessary for the supply of the *real* wants of three times its present number of inhabitants, or about 3,000,000,000, people.

Ah! Malthus! Had you bent all the powers of your genius against the oppressors of man; had you employed all your shining abilities in the amelioration of the condition of mankind, by insisting on a more equal distribution of human subsistence; had you invented a system by the adoption of which the means may be furnished for amply providing for a rapidly increasing population; or had you only supported such a system, for such a system was invented, long before your book on population was written, what a noble work had been yours. What a glorious immortality had been your reward!

But by proposing *a check on population*, you have proclaimed yourself a rebel of nature²¹, and a speculative murderer of your spies, for the voice of nature cannot be stifled, neither can her laws be reversed; if you wrote to immortalize yourself you have effected your purpose, for your name shall out live that of *Erostratus*²², he only fired the temple of an Heathen goddess; but you have attempted to destroy the temple of humanity, the throne of justice, and that glorious empire which reason holds in the breast of man! Yes, your name shall live amidst the hisses, and execrations of posterity, and distant ages having historical proof of your existence shall scarcely doubt the existence of the fabled monsters of antiquity, who banquetted on human flesh.

Now, Sir, before I conclude, I must once more insist, that the monopoly in land by individuals, who transfer, by the laws of primogeniture their entire estates to one sole heir, and the holding the same in perpetuity, are the greatest of all political evils. Does not the landholders of England, at the present moment, hold the power not only to enslave, but even to starve the landless part of the population? Mr. Cobbett says they have the power, and so say I, and so say a thousand more. And if we look back to the years of 1800, and 1801, we shall see that hundreds of individuals were starved even to death by a dearth of the necessaries of life,

²¹ Malthus may be a rebel towards a class of mankind; but "a rebel of nature" is nonsense. My war with the Gods has some meaning; though these Gods are phantoms; but how a man is to rebel against nature, I cannot conceive.

R. C.

²² I doubt that very much. The name and book of Malthus has already reached comparative obscurity.

R. C.

which was proved afterwards to be only an artificial one : to be a dearth created by the murderous hand of monopoly. But whether this power be exercised or not, it is the height of folly in any nation to suffer such a dangerous power to remain in the hands of any set of individuals.

This will probably be the last effort I shall make on this subject, for after all, if the present generation think that the land cannot be placed in better hands than it is at present, the present system is sufficient for the present age. But posterity may think otherwise, and to posterity I leave it, who will pronounce, whether my views are wild and visionary, or whether the system of which I am the humble advocate is the most just, the most humane, and the most natural system, that ever was submitted to the world, for the political redemption of mankind ²³.

Meantime, I remain, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

ALLEN DAVENPORT.

INDICTMENT OF JAMES AFFLECK,

(Concluded from page 384.)

“ Even the murderer’s cheek

Was blanched with horror, and his quivering lips

Scarce faintly uttered—O, Almighty One,

I tremble and obey!

O Spirit! centuries have set their seal

On this heart of many wounds, and loaded brain,

Since the Incarnate came: humbly he came,

Veiling his horrible Godhead in the shape

Of man, scorned by the world, his name unheard,

Save by the rabble of his native town,

Even as a parish demagogue. He led

The crowd; he taught them justice, truth and peace,

In semblance; but he lit within their souls

The quenchless flames of zeal, and blest the sword

He brought on earth to satiate with the blood

²³ To posterity we’ll leave it, as we cannot settle the matter, so as to put it into practice for the present. The Priests are in the way. The Priests hold their benefices on the presentations of the Aristocrats, which makes every priest a strickler for the privileges of such aristocrats. Unchristianize your neighbours, Allen Davenport, and then you will be journeying straight forward to your “promised land;” to “your land of great promise that floweth with milk and honey.” Whilst you keep these drones in the hive, they must be fed by your honey.

Of truth and freedom his malignant soul.
 At length his mortal frame was led to death.
 I stood beside him : on the torturing cross
 No pain assailed his unterrestrial sense;
 And yet he groaned. Indignantly I summed
 The massacres and miseries which his name
 Had sanctioned in my country, and I cried,
 Go! go! in mockery."

And also the following passage:—

"The plurality of worlds, the indefinite immensity of the universe, is a most awful subject of contemplation. He who rightly feels its mystery and grandeur, is in no danger of seduction from the falsehoods of religious systems, or of deifying the principle of the universe.—It is impossible to believe that the Spirit that pervades this infinite machine begat a son upon the body of a Jewish woman; or is angered at the consequences of that necessity, which is a synonyme of itself.—All that miserable tale of the Devil and Eve, and an Intercessor, with the childish mummeries of the God of the Jews, is irreconcilable with the knowledge of the stars. The works of his fingers have borne witness against him." And you the said James Affleck having been taken before George Tait, sheriff-substitute of Edinburgh, did, in his presence, at Edinburgh, emit and subscribe two several declarations, one on the 20th and another on the 23d days of February 1824: Which declarations, as also the three several printed copies of the respective books or works particularly above libelled; as also a writing entitled at the beginning "List of books, &c. found in the shop of James Affleck, bookseller, Adam's square, and taken possession of in virtue of a warrant from the Sheriff, dated 20th Feb. 1824," and docqueted on the fifth page as relative to your said declaration of 20th Feb. 1824; as also a paper or writing entitled on the back, "Inventory of books, pamphlets, &c. taken possession of this 21st February 1824," and bearing to be subscribed by you on the third page; as also a printed paper entitled "A catalogue of Political and Theological books sold by James Affleck, No. 74, Adam's Square, South Bridge Street, Edinburgh;" being all to be used in evidence against you at your trial, will be lodged in due time in the hands of the Clerk of the High Court of Justiciary, before which you are to be tried, that you may have an opportunity of seeing the same: AT LEAST, times and places above libelled, respectively, the profane, impious,

and blasphemous books and works above libelled, denying the truth and authority of the Holy Scriptures and Christian Religion, and tending to asperse, vilify, ridicule, and bring into contempt the Holy Scriptures and Christian Religion, were printed published, vended, and circulated respectively as above libelled; and you the said James Affleck are guilty thereof, actor, or art and part. ALL WHICH, or part thereof, being found proven by the verdict of an Assize before the Lord Justice-General, Lord Justice-Clerk, and Lords Commissioners of Justiciary; you the said James Affleck OUGHT to be punished with the pains of law to deter others from committing the like crimes in all time coming.

JOHN HOPE, *A. D.*

LIST OF WITNESSES.

- 1 George Tait, sheriff substitute of Edinburghshire.
- 2 Archibald Scott, procuratar fiscal of Edinburghshire.
- 3 George Bouchard, now or lately clerk in the sheriff clerk's office, Edinburgh.
- 4 George Dichmont, now or lately sheriff's officer in Edinburgh.
- 5 John Nugent, now or lately residing in the Pleasance of Edinburgh, No. 81.
- 6 Alexander Thomson, now or lately residing in the Pleasance of Edinburgh, at No. 51, at or near to the Head of Arthur Street there.
- 7 James Wilson, sheriff clerk of Edinburghshire.
- 8 John Crawford, now or lately clerk in the sheriff clerk's office, Edinburgh.
- 9 James Mitchell, now or lately clerk in the sheriff-clerk's office, Edinburgh.
- 10 Thomas Birnie, now or lately sheriff-officer in Edinburgh.
- 11 David, Webster, now or lately printer in Horse Wynd of Edinburgh, and now or lately residing there.
- 12 Thomas Webster, son of, and now or lately in the employment of the said David Webster in Horse Wynd aforesaid.
- 13 Thomas Brown, nor or lately in the employment of the said David Webser in the Horse Wynd aforesaid.
- 14 Daniel Shaw, printer, now or lately residing with John Martin, wright, head of Cowgate of Edinburgh.

JOHN HOPE, *A. D.*

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICIARY.

May 21.

JAMES AFFLECK, bookseller in Adam's Square, was placed at the bar, charged with publishing and vending seditious and blasphemous publications.

Mr. Jeffrey.—I understand the charge is for selling and vending, my Lord, and I rise to crave the indulgence of the Court to be allowed to state some circumstances in mitigation of punishment, before you proceed to judgment.

Lord Justice Clerk.—Certainly. His Lordship again asked the panel, are you Guilty or Not Guilty.

James Affleck.—Guilty, my Lord.

The Clerk of Court then read the confession of the prisoner, which was subscribed by himself, and the Jury unanimously found him guilty in terms of his own confession.

Mr. Jeffery.—My Lord, there are one or two things which it is proper to suggest for the consideration of the Court, before pronouncing judgment in this case, and the first to which I beg leave to call your attention is, the candour and contrition of the prisoner in pleading guilty to the charges in the indictment, which shows that he is extremely desirous to prevent the discussion of a case, which his imprudence and want of consideration has occasioned. The offence of which he is charged, fortunately for this country, is the only offence of the kind in the annals of this Court—not that I mean to infer thereby, that the offence is the less, because it is utterly unknown to us, although known to our brethren in another quarter of the island; but I believe this Court have never been called upon to judge of a case of this kind. The Learned Counsel then proceeded to state very minutely, the history and circumstances of the prisoner; how he had been induced to enter into the speculation of setting up a small book shop, and added, though he did not think the prisoner altogether ignorant of the impropriety of selling such works, yet he attributed it wholly to his ignorance and inexperience in trade, and not to any desire to hurt the moral or religious feelings of the community. This opinion he (the Counsel) was the more inclined to hazard, as some of the most offensive of these works were sold in the most respectable booksellers' shops in Edinburgh. He did not mention this circumstance in defence or exculpation of the prisoner for selling such works, but surely it merited their Lordships' consideration in judging of the case of one who has far less

experience and knowledge that the individuals who, yet in point of fact, are equally liable. There was one other circumstance in favour of the prisoner, which required to be noticed, and that is, that when the seizure was made of these articles, he voluntarily, and without resistance, gave up the whole, and very soon afterwards addressed an application to his Majesty's Advocate offering to find security to his Lordships satisfaction, or if his Lordship would require it, to abandon the sale of these books altogether. His Lordship, however did not find it consistent with his duty to pass from this offence upon caution, though I am sure that any thing you will find will be consented to by the Learned Public Prosecutor. This application, however, he not only made, but entirely abandoned trade, and finally shut shop altogether, although the lease does not expire till 1825, for the rent of which he is of course still liable. The Learned Counsel concluded, by expressing his hopes that in consideration of these circumstances, their Lordships would award a limited punishment.

The Lord Justice Clerk here took occasion to express his high approbation of the very prudent and able manner in which the Counsel for the panel had conducted the defence.

Lord Hermand proposed that the prisoner be confined for three months.

Lord Gillies entertained the same opinion.

Lord Pitmilley had never read any thing with more pain than the charges contained in the indictment; but the judiciousness of the Counsel for the prisoner, in advising him to plead guilty, and resting the defence on the grounds which he had done, enabled them to do what otherwise they could not have done; and he heartily concurred in the lenient punishment that had been proposed.

Lord Succoth also concurred in the lenient punishment proposed, and trusted that persons of the description of the panel at the bar would not take a mistaken view of the leniency of the punishment, as the recurrence of similar offence should meet a severer sentence.

Lord Meadowbank agreed in every word that had been stated.

The Lord Justice Clerk, in passing sentence, said that from the course which these proceedings had taken, in consequence of the very salutary advice of Counsel, it was in the power of the Court to pronounce the very lenient punishment that had been proposed. I certainly, as well the rest of the Court, came here this day very strongly impressed with the serious nature of the charges laid against you; and

no man cerainly can view the atrocious nature of these publications but with astonishment and horror. It has been stated that you have been seduced from the path of duty, to lend yourself as an instrument for the sale of those books; but you must have been sensible of the gross impropriety of such conduct, and the high crime which you were committing. You have, in the face of this Court, and of your country, made the only atonement that was possible for you to make, in feeling expressions of sorrow, and the hope of a firm resolution to abstain from all such practices in future. His Lordship hoped that this day's proceedings would have their due effect upon the panel, and prevent all others from similar practices, for the vigilant eye of the Public Prosecutor will be directed against such, and the same law which is in operation in the sister kinkdom will be administered with like severity in this. If any such proceeding shall occur again, it will not be in the power of the Court, if it mean to discharge the duty with it owes to God and the country, to pronounce a similar lenient decision. This is the first Justiciary trial of the kind, and I hope it will be the last. His Lordship concurred in the punishment proposed, and sentence was passed: Decern and adjudge the said James Affleck to be imprisoned in the Goal of Edinburgh for the space of three calendar months, and afterwards to find security for the space of five years, under the penalty of £100. sterling.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE LAWYER'S BILL OF
FARE ON THE OCCASION.

		£.	s.	d.
First Counsel Mr. Jeffery	{ Consulting fee	3	3	0
	{ Managing fee	10	10	0
Second Counsel Mr. Maitland several times consulted.	{ Consulting fee	3	3	0
	{ Managing fee	7	7	0
Agent, George Robertson writing, examining witnesses, &c.	{ W. Signet	13	13	0
Messenger Summoning witnsses		1	10	0
Dues of Court		4	9	9
		<hr/>		
		£43. 15 9		

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